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E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/27/2026  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [IR](#) [CH](#) [JA](#)  
SUBJECT: INR ASSISTANT SECRETARY FORT'S SEPTEMBER 25  
MEETING WITH CIRO DIRECTOR MITANI

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Joseph R. Donovan. Reasons 1.4(b), (d)  
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¶1. (S) SUMMARY: INR A/S Fort and CIRO Director Mitani met September 25 to exchanged views on intelligence cooperation, with A/S Fort suggesting that Japan examine how the Australian intelligence services have handled the protection of classified information. A/S Fort observed that Japan could help the United States better understand developments in Iran because of its diplomatic and commercial presence there. He also proposed that the two countries collaborate to more fully utilize open source reporting. Mitani predicted that incoming Prime Minister Shinzo Abe will continue to pursue a policy of ambiguity toward the Yasukuni Shrine issue. END SUMMARY.

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INCREASED INTELLIGENCE COOPERATION  
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¶2. (S) During a September 25 meeting, INR Assistant Secretary Randall Fort told Cabinet Intelligence and Research

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Office (CIRO) Director Hideshi Mitani that, with a new Prime Minister assuming office the following day (September 26), now was an appropriate time to examine possible closer intelligence cooperation. It was his hope that our two countries would continue to develop a strategic dialogue in this area. Mitani replied that U.S. and Japanese intelligence counterparts have enjoyed close relations and that the Japanese intelligence community hopes to increase and enhance these ties. He pointed to the effective joint response to the DPRK's July 5 missile launches as an example of how the two intelligence communities are interacting. "Our leadership is very satisfied," he said.

¶3. (S) As our intelligence relationship matures, Japan will need to take additional steps to improve internal controls over classified information, A/S Fort told Mitani. He offered to share INR's experiences in handling classified information if the Japanese thought it would be useful in developing their capabilities. He also suggested also that Japan might study how the Australians have tackled this issue. The Australians have done an outstanding job of protecting classified information, he said, noting that their intelligence community is roughly comparable in size to Japan's.

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IRAN

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14. (S) Japan has a unique opportunity to help the United States better understand Iran's internal dynamics, A/S Fort told Mitani. Because Japan has a diplomatic presence in Tehran and because Japanese businessmen travel frequently in Iran, Japan is able to observe what is taking place there. Any diplomatic or intelligence reporting Japan received from Iran, no matter how seemingly mundane, would be extremely valuable to us, A/S Fort stated. Mitani replied that since the change of administrations in Iran, Japan had lost some valuable sources. He acknowledged the value of Japan's presence in Iran, and noted ongoing negotiations concerning the Azadegan oil field. Iran, he said, was trying to use these negotiations as a card to play against Japan. Tokyo was being very careful to avoid falling into any traps.

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OPEN SOURCE ANALYSIS  
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15. (C) Another opportunity for cooperation, Fort told Mitani, is in the field of analyzing open source reporting. The volume of this information is so great that it is difficult to exploit effectively. The need to translate much of it also complicates and slows the process. Because open sources are all unclassified, it would be much easier for the United States and Japan to cooperate and share information, he suggested. Mitani concurred that sorting through open source reporting is time consuming and resource intensive. Without making any commitments, he agreed that working together to find ways to address this problem would be beneficial.

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CHINA  
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16. (C) Mitani asked whether the United States had noted any change in China's foreign policy behavior in the past few months. A/S Fort replied that China's response to the North Korean missile launches had displayed a much more responsible, global approach to the DPRK problem than in the past. While this may not signify a basic policy change by the Chinese, it at least signaled a more nuanced view of their role in the region and beyond. In addition, China's decision to embark upon building more sophisticated financial relationships with the United States, as indicated by the new strategic dialogue announced recently by Treasury Secretary Paulson, is similar to those already developing in the political and military fields, and might also point to a subtle change in outlook. With regard to Japan, China's decision to "lower the volume" on Yasukuni now that Prime Minister Koizumi is departing might signify a willingness to strive for improved relations.

17. (C) On Yasukuni, Mitani said that Abe has intentionally chosen to follow an ambiguous policy in order to leave everyone guessing about his true designs. This approach would buy him some time, Mitani predicted, but media will begin to press this matter once again next summer. He said he does not think the recent revelations about the Showa Emperor's thoughts on Yasukuni will play a role in Abe's approach toward the Shrine issue.

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PARTICIPANTS  
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18. (S) U.S. participants:

- Assistant Secretary Randall Fort
- INR/NEA Chief John Merrill
- Embassy SIMO Representative Constance Taube
- Political Officer Keith Jordan (control officer)
- Political Officer Evan Reade (notetaker)

19. (C) Japanese participants:

- Director of Cabinet Intelligence Hideshi Mitani
- Cabinet Intelligence and Research Office Director of for International Relations Hiroaki Takizawa

DONOVAN